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BROOKLYN AND STATEN ISLAND TUNNEL.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1890.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BAKER, from the Committee on Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 12042.]

The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 12042) to authorize the construction of a tunnel under the waters of the bay of New York, between the town of Middletown, in the county of Richmond, and the town of New Utrecht, in the county of Kings, in the State of New York, and to establish the same as a post-road, submit the following report:

This is a bill granting the consent of Congress to the construction of a tunnel under the navigable channel that flows between Staten Island and Long Island, in the State of New York, just above the passage known as the Narrows, the said channel being an arm of New York Bay, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide at the point selected for the work, and 49 feet deep at the deepest soundings.

In the consideration of this bill your committee have given careful attention to the magnitude of the commercial interests involved in the construction of the proposed tunnel, and it finds many and strong reasons for making a favorable report.

In the first place the district of the State of New York known as Long Island contains, according to the recent census enumeration, 1,000,000 inhabitants, and it has no railway communication with the mainland. This would be a great deprivation to any section containing an equal population, but it is especially injurious to this section. It is a district in which commercial and manufacturing interests are of even startling magnitude.

The city of Brooklyn alone contains between 800,000 and 900,000 inhabitants, and an assessed valuation in property of nearly \$450,000,000. It has water-front warehouses to the enormous extent of 4 miles in length, including the well-known Atlantic and Erie basins. During the last fiscal year the merchandise stored in those warehouses carried insurance to the amount of \$600,000,000. There is also now under construction in the city still other water-front improvements of such magnitude that they will involve the expenditure of many millions of capital. Yet all this property is so located that it is inaccessible to the railways except at heavy cost for terminal transportation.

Your committee finds, again, that there are located in the said city of Brooklyn between 5,000 and 6,000 factories. Many of these factories turn out products which entail heavy expense for transportation. But, like the warehouses, they are inaccessible from the mainland, and can therefore be operated only with diminished profit.

The consumption of coal on Long Island, in the year 1889, was about 2,250,000 tons. This coal was necessarily handled by the most primitive and expensive appliances known, wasteful alike to dealers and consumers, and entailing still further loss to manufacturers. A saving of over 50 cents per ton, which could be made in avoiding transfer and other charges, would, it is claimed, alone justify the investment called for.

Your committee have considered these facts and their relation to the local interests of Long Island, and they have further considered their bearings on all questions affecting the general commerce of the port of New York.

It is very well known that nearly half the export trade of the entire country, and more than 60 per cent. of its import trade, is carried out through the port of New York; and it should be also known that the coastwise trade in domestic and imported merchandise is continually and rapidly increasing. But it is probably not so well known that the harbor of New York, notwithstanding its great extent, is becoming dangerously crowded. Collisions in the channels, and even in the open day, are becoming alarmingly frequent. Ocean steam-ships have been sunk by coming into contact with heavily-laden harbor craft, and harbor craft, in their turn, have been sunk or disabled by colliding with ocean-going ships, or with each other. Lives have been lost and much valuable property has been destroyed by these unfortunate incidents.

The liability to accidents of the kind, too strong at all times, is greatly increased by the large floats containing trains of cars, in tow of tugs that can not afford sufficient steering power to avoid collisions. The prevalence of fogs and floating ice at certain seasons adds to existing dangers, and it is therefore becoming imperatively necessary that every encouragement shall be given to the construction of tunnels, to the end that the various sections of the water front where merchandise is stored and transhipped may be reached inexpensively, directly, and without the use of floats or other agencies for river and harbor transportation.

But there is also a question of general economy which your committee have considered. Direct railway communication with the water front in all sections of the port of New York is necessary to keep down the cost of transportation. The prevailing system of handling merchandise in that port is very expensive. It has been alleged that at times it costs as much to handle a barrel of flour in the harbor of New York after it reaches tide water in Jersey City, as it has cost to bring it from Chicago, and though this is probably an exaggerated condition, it is true that terminal expenses are much too great for the interests of commerce. But except through the construction of tunnels, which are inexpensive, there is no means of overcoming the heavy cost of terminal transportation. The trains must be enabled to reach all sections of the water front without subjecting the railways either to the heavy costs of the river and harbor service or to heavy fixed charges of any kind.

There is also another consideration which your committee have had in view. The water front of Brooklyn, and Long Island City to the northwest of Brooklyn, extends along the direct and vast obstructed line for opening communication between the trunk line roads that concentrate on the west bank of the Hudson River and the New England roads. With plans for facilitating interstate commerce in view this is a consideration of the first importance. After the completion of the proposed tunnel under the narrow arm of New York Bay there can be little doubt that a junction will soon be formed with the eastern rail-

ways by means of a bridge across East River at Blackwell's Island or of a second tunnel under the East River near Flushing Bay. There the channel is only about a half a mile wide, and the obstructions are believed to be slight. The construction of the second tunnel, then, and a connecting railway, would naturally follow on the completion of the first tunnel, and the event would be greatly to the advantage of the New England States.

On all these considerations your committee is constrained to report the bill unanimously for favorable action and passage.

The blue lines on the attached map show the location of the tunnel and the approaches thereto.

Your committee recommend the passage of the bill, with the following amendments:

Section 2, strike out the words "and shall" of line 3, and all of lines 4, and 5 and insert in lieu thereof the words, "that the upper surface of the covering arch of the said tunnel shall be placed at a depth below the bed of the said bay sufficient to."

At the end of section 2 add the following words, "and no obstruction either of a temporary or permanent character to the free and unrestricted navigation of the said bay of New York shall be built anywhere within the waters of said bay in connection with the construction of the tunnel or any part thereof."

At the end of section 3 add "and over the approaches thereto."

Section 4, line 15, after the word "with" insert the words "or endanger."

Section 3, line 1, after the word "act" insert the words "together with the approaches thereto."

Section 5, line 2, after the word "years" insert the words, "and completed within ten years."

Your committee annex hereto, and make part of their report, the correspondence relating to said bill from the War Department.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington, September 23, 1890.

SIR: I return herewith House bill 12042, "to authorize the construction of a tunnel under the waters of the bay of New York, between the town of Middletown, in the county of Richmond, and the town of New Utrecht, in the county of Kings, in the State of New York, and to establish the same as a post-road," referred to this Department on the 17th instant, and invite your attention to the inclosed report of the Chief of Engineers, dated the 22d instant, together with a copy of the report of Lieut. Col. G. L. Gillespie, Corps of Engineers, referred to therein, and an amended copy of the bill expressing the views of the Department.

Very respectfully,

L. A. GRANT,
Acting Secretary of War
House of Representatives.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY,
Washington, D. C., September 22, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to return herewith House bill 12042, Fifty-first Congress, first session, "A bill to authorize the construction of a tunnel under the waters of the bay of New York, between the town of Middletown, in the county of Richmond, and the town of New Utrecht, in the county of Kings, in the State of New York, and to establish the same as a post-road," and, in reply to its reference to this office, I beg to say that the bill was referred to Lieut. Col. G. L. Gillespie, Corps of Engineers, a copy of whose report thereon is herewith submitted, to which attention is respectfully invited.

Colonel Gillespie is of the opinion that the bill should be so amended as to prohibit the construction of a tunnel or any part thereof which shall rise above the bed of the bay, and also to prohibit the erection within the waters of the bay of any structures, temporary or permanent, which will in any way obstruct the free navigation of the bay while the tunnel is in process of construction.

I concur in the views of Colonel Gillespie, and recommend that the bill be amended as follows:

Section 2, after the word "New York," in line 3, strike out all down to and including the word "to" in line 5, and insert in lieu thereof the following: "That the upper surface of the covering arch of the said tunnel shall be placed at a depth below the bed of the said bay sufficient to."

Line 8, after the word "thereof" insert the following: "and no obstruction, either of a temporary or permanent character, to the free and unrestricted navigation of the said bay of New York shall be built anywhere within the waters of said bay, in connection with the construction of the tunnel or any part thereof."

Section 3, line 10, after the word "tunnel" insert "and over the approaches thereto."

Section 4, line 15, after the word "with" insert "or endanger."

A copy of House bill 12042, with the proposed amendments indicated thereon, is herewith submitted, and, as thus amended, I know of no objection to its passage by Congress, so far as the interests of navigation are concerned.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

THOS. LINCOLN CASEY,
Brigadier-General, Chief of Engineers.

Hon. REDFIELD PROCTOR,
Secretary of War.

ENGINEER OFFICE, U. S. ARMY,
New York, N. Y., September 19, 1890.

GENERAL: I have the honor to return herewith House bill No. 12042, Fifty-first Congress, first session, authorizing "the construction of a tunnel under the waters of the bay of New York, between the town of Middletown, in the county of Richmond, and the town of New Utrecht, in the county of Kings, in the State of New York, and to establish the same as a post-road," which was referred to me for early report by the Department under date of September 18, 1890.

Section 2 has been amended with the view to prohibit the construction of a tunnel or any part thereof which shall rise above the bed of the bay, and also to prohibit the erection within the waters of the bay of any structures, temporary or permanent, which will in any way obstruct the free navigation of the bay while the tunnel is in process of construction.

The part of the harbor which it is proposed to cross by the tunnel is the chief highway to the port of New York, and should be zealously protected against every encroachment. If any part of the tunnel projects above the bed of the bay it will act as a submerged dam, and will inevitably cause the upper bay to shoal up. And, further, no piers should be built nor floating structures moored anywhere in the water-way in connection with the construction of the tunnel, to act as obstructions to the approaches to the port. The channel is none too wide for present demands, and any diminution to its width or obstruction to its free use would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the port.

The other parts of the bill seem unobjectionable.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. L. GILLESPIE,
Lieutenant-Colonel of Engineers.

Brig. Gen. THOMAS L. CASEY,
Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.



